



The Prologue

Paul, a young American, is to make his first flight in battle on the morrow. Marie, his pretty French sweetheart, is confident that he will be as brave as the great Charles Nungesser, whose exploits in the air has won him the title of France's Flying Fiend.

Another in love with Marie is Vanesse, a mechanic who plots Paul's undoing. He steals Paul's flying insignia—only one of these is ever given to a man; once lost, they are never replaced—and rams it into the intake manifold of the engine in Nungesser's plane, so that, when they fly into battle, Nungesser's plane fails him and he is badly wounded.

Paul does some spectacular fighting and is the hero of that brief moment before his wings are found in Nungesser's engine. Quickly the accusation is made and the proof examined by the Commandant. War trial and judgment is swift and severe, and Paul is sentenced to twenty years in a military prison.

Vanesse is ordered to strip Paul of his buttons and, as he does so, he whispers to the doomed boy that he believes Nungesser placed the wings in his own engine as an excuse for the poor showing he made in battle that day. Hatred for Nungesser flames in Paul's soul.

When a Hero Loves

Six years later, the Willards of Washington, D. C., who have ceaselessly sought information of their son, who ran away to war and, they finally discovered, enlisted in the French flying corps under an assumed name, call upon Captain Vanesse, now operating a commercial flying field. He is also laying cunning plans for the first air mail robbery in history.

From a photograph, Vanesse recognizes the Willard's son as the victim of his treachery. Recognizing the Willards as people of wealth and social position whose friendship would be an asset to him, he decides to lie. "Yes," he tells them, "I knew your boy. I was with him when he died—like a hero."

On an anniversary of Armistice Day the Willards, who have journeyed to Paris for this purpose, lay a wreath on the grave of the Unknown Soldier beneath the Arch de Triomphe. After the ceremonies they meet Captain Charles Nungesser, whose record of one hundred and five planes made him the world's greatest living Ace. Lucille, whose beauty and loveliness has not been lost on the captain, tells him of her brother and shows him his picture, which he recognizes. But, unlike Vanesse, he says nothing. Instead he makes a great decision.

Telling nothing of his plans to the Willards, Nungesser, to whom France will grant any favor, applies for Paul's release, and gets it. He flies to the war prison in the South of France, but when Paul is brought before Nungesser and told of his release, instead of showing gratitude he whirls upon the captain with contempt and fury. "You," he cries. "You are trying to be the hero again! After framing me into this jail—letting me rot here for six years—now trying to make a grand gesture! Of what use is freedom, so long as I am disgraced?"

Paul's words puzzle Nungesser and he decides to seek Vanesse for an explanation, so he goes to America.

A Traitor's Revenge

Marie has been married these six years to Vanesse and has never ceased to regret it. Though she is his, he knows she has never loved him—that she still loves the memory of Paul. Furious because repulses him, he gloats over her agony when he tells her that he has betrayed Paul. He snatches the unhappy girl in his strong arms, burning kisses on her face. Grabbing the thing nearest to his reach—the telephone—she brings it crashing down on his head. He falls senseless to the floor, and, in terror for fear she has killed Marie flees into the night.

In the meantime, Paul (having learned that Marie married Vanesse and went with him to America) has made his way back to Washington and is watching his loved mother, father and sister through the window of their home, where, at a ball, Lucille's engagement is announced to Nungesser. Paul's heart aches—he longs to take his loved ones in his arms, but he must never let them know that he lives, for he loves them too much to cast upon them the shadow of his disgrace.

Among the throng he recognizes Vanesse and lies in wait for him. Vanesse, the traitor, is not pleased to see Paul, but quickly masks his feelings. He has a plan and takes Paul to his apartment, where he tells him of Lucille's engagement to Nungesser. Then he telephones Lucille that if she would hear some good news of her brother, she could come, with Nungesser, to his apartment. When they arrive he tells Lucille that Nungesser framed her brother into a war prison, and then, dramatically drawing aside a curtain, discloses Paul, who corroborates the accusation. Heart-broken, Lucille returns Nungesser's ring. He is silent before the accusation, for he cannot prove his innocence.

The Air Mail Robbery

One day Marie visits Nungesser and tells him what her husband confessed to her in his jealous rage. Nungesser at last understands many things that have puzzled him. He acts quickly. Phoning Paul, he tells him that, if he isn't a coward he'll come over and fight. Paul accepts the challenge—and finds Marie, who joyously rushes into his arms. Then she tells him the whole terrible story—the truth at last. Poor Paul is stung with remorse. All the cruel things he has said to Nungesser ring in his ears and he sinks to his knees, begging forgiveness, which Nungesser is only too eager and glad to grant.

He then tells Paul and Marie how he has had Vanesse watched and that he knows he plans to rob the Air Mail, though the exact date is unknown. Paul agrees to continue to profess friendship for Vanesse, and thus he learns the time set for the robbery and tips off Nungesser, who gives chase in his Nieuport, while Paul follows in another plane, with Marie and Lucille.

Vanesse, in a daring air manoeuvre, gets his loot, but he is unable to escape the utterly fearless Nungesser, who is determined—as he always was in battle—to get his man. Vanesse and his plane finally crash to earth in flames. Paul's plane reaches the scene in time for him to witness the traitor's signed confession.

And there, 'neath the sky near which they had so recently flown, two pairs of lovers were re-united and flew to the heights on the wings of happiness.

Gilbert E. Gable

Presents

A T. Hayes Hunter Production

"THE SKY RAIDER"

From "The Great Air Mail Robbery" by Jack Lait, with
Jacqueline Logan and Captain Charles Nungesser,
the World's Greatest Living Ace.

Cast of Characters

Nungesser	-----	Capt. Charles Nungesser
Lucille Willard	-----	Jacqueline Logan
Marie	-----	Gladys Walton
Paul	-----	Walter Miller
Gregg Vanesse	-----	Lawford Davidson
Senator Willard	-----	Theodore Babcock
Mrs. Willard	-----	Ida Darling
Prison Commandant	-----	Wilton Lackaye
Forot	-----	Edouard Durand

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